

Amendment Dated: July 21, 2003

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising:  
charging an image bearer with a charger;  
irradiating the image bearer with light to form an electrostatic latent image thereon;  
developing the electrostatic latent image with a toner to form a toner image on the  
image bearer;  
transferring the toner image onto a transfer sheet with a transferer;  
fixing the toner image on the transfer sheet upon application of heat; and  
cleaning a surface of the image bearer with a cleaner; and  
wherein the toner comprises:  
a binder resin;  
a colorant; and  
a zirconium compound ~~including~~ formed of zirconium and at least one  
compound selected from the group consisting of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid and, a salt  
thereof of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid and mixtures thereof; said zirconium compound  
having a main diffraction peak (A) at a Bragg (2 $\theta$ ) angle of  $5.5 \pm 0.3^\circ$  and a diffraction  
intensity of from 2,000 to 15,000 cps when irradiated with a specific X-ray of CuK $\alpha$ .
2. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ wherein  
said fixing step comprises:  
transporting the transfer sheet having the toner image thereon while at least one elastic

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roller contacts the transfer sheet to fix the toner image thereon upon application of heat.

3. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin~~ wherein the zirconium compound further has a sub-diffraction peak (B) at a Bragg (2 $\theta$ ) angle of  $31.6 \pm 0.3^\circ$  when irradiated with the specific X-ray of CuK $\alpha$ , and wherein a diffraction intensity ratio (A/B) of the main diffraction peak (A) to the sub-diffraction peak (B) is from 3 to 25.

4. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin~~ wherein the zirconium compound has an average particle diameter of from 0.2 to 4.0  $\mu\text{m}$ .

5. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin~~ wherein the zirconium compound is subjected to an extraction treatment so as to be dispersed in an ion exchanged water at a concentration of  $1.5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ g/cm}^3$ ; and  
wherein the ion exchanged water has a conductivity of from 5 to 20 S/cm.

6. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin~~ wherein a content of the zirconium compound in the toner is from 0.5 to 5 parts by weight based on a total weight of the binder resin.

7. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin~~ wherein the toner ~~includes~~ comprises a volatile component in an amount not greater than 0.1% by weight based on a total weight of the toner when measured at a temperature of from 100 to 150  $^\circ\text{C}$ .

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8. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherein the at least one of an~~ wherein said aromatic oxycarboxylic acid ~~and a salt thereof~~ is a 3,5-di-tertiary-butylsalicylic acid.

9. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherein~~ wherein the binder resin comprises a polyester resin in an amount of from 50 to 100 % by weight based on total weight of the binder resin, and wherein the polyester resin has an acid value of from 5 to 25 mg KOH/g.

10. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherein~~ wherein the charging is performed while contacting the charger with the image bearer.

11. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherein~~ wherein the transferring is performed while contacting the transferer with the image bearer.

12. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherein~~ wherein the cleaner is a cleaning blade.

13. (Currently Amended) A toner composition comprising:

a binder resin;

a colorant; and

a zirconium compound ~~including~~ formed of zirconium and at least one compound

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selected from the group consisting of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid or, a salt thereof of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid, and mixtures thereof.

wherein the zirconium compound ~~having~~ has a main diffraction peak (A) at a Bragg (2 $\theta$ ) angle of  $5.5 \pm 0.3^\circ$  and a diffraction intensity of from 2,000 to 15,000 cps when irradiated with a specific X-ray of CuK $\alpha$ .

14. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin~~ wherein the zirconium compound further has a sub-diffraction peak (B) at a Bragg (2 $\theta$ ) angle of  $31.6 \pm 0.3^\circ$  when irradiated with the specific X-ray of CuK $\alpha$ ; and

wherein a diffraction intensity ratio (A/B) of the main diffraction peak (A) to the sub-diffraction peak (B) is from 3 to 25.

15. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin~~ wherein the zirconium compound has an average particle diameter of from 0.2 to 4.0  $\mu\text{m}$ .

16. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin when~~ wherein the zirconium compound is subjected to an extraction treatment so as to be dispersed in an ion exchanged water at a concentration of  $1.5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ g/cm}^3$ ; and

wherein the ion exchanged water has a conductivity of from 5 to 20 S/cm.

17. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, wherein a content of the zirconium compound in the toner composition is from 0.5 to 5 parts by weight based on a

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total weight of the binder resin.

18. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, further comprising a volatile component in an amount not greater than 0.1 % by weight based on a total weight of the toner when measured at a temperature of from 100 to 150 °C.

19. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin the at least one of an~~ wherein said aromatic oxycarboxylic acid ~~and a salt thereof~~ is a 3,5-di-tertiary-butylsalicylic acid.

20. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin~~ wherein the binder resin comprises a polyester resin in an amount of from 50 to 100 % by weight based on a total weight of the binder resin; and

wherein the polyester resin has an acid value of from 5 to 25 mg KOH/g.